

Kilmaronock Local Place Plan



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Foreword

Kilmarnock Community Council are proud to be presenting this Local Place Plan to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority on behalf of the people of our community.

The plan is the culmination of many months of consultation, listening, research and thinking. Through a comprehensive survey, open conversations in the Kilmarnock Millenium hall and direct consultation with specific groups, we have ensured that the people of Kilmarnock have had a genuine opportunity to think through what initiatives they want to see in our community. We have worked hard to ensure people of all ages and backgrounds have had their say. This has been an important time where we have had space to talk to each other and to come to a conclusion about the kind of place we want to live, work and have our leisure time in.

Kilmarnock is a unique place. It is a hidden gem in one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland. In many ways we are on the edge. We are on the fringes of one of Scotland's two national parks while also being the only rural parish in West Dumbartonshire. We are surrounded by an amazing natural environment while being in very close proximity to Scotland's urban population centres.

We recognise that we are in a time of change that is impacting on the community of Kilmarnock and the people who live here. We have an aging population, our traditional agricultural economy is changing, covid has revolutionised working practices and it is hard for many people to secure a home to stay here. The climate emergency is the underpinning consideration for the plan as a whole, but we have a resilient community within a beautiful natural environment. We have people who are highly skilled, who are proud to live here and who feel it has a great history and sense of community. This Local Place Plan responds to the challenges and builds on the assets to create a vision for the future.

We also recognise that this process has been a collaborative one. We want to thank the National Park Authority who have guided and supported us and we look forward to a close working relationship as the plan is implemented.

Bringing people together to think through the kind of community we want has been a positive experience and has created a great sense of expectation and opportunity. We are all part of making this a community to be even more proud of.

Rob Vincent, Chair of the Local Place Plan Steering Group

1. What is a Local Place Plan

The “Place Principle” was adopted by the Scottish Government and COSLA in 2018. It was initially embedded in legislation in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and finally set out when the National Planning Framework 4 was enacted in February 2023. This gives communities the right to feed into the planning system with ideas and to influence policy.

Our plan set out here is intended to be the submission to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA), to influence the development of its next Development Plan about what should happen in each community and where it should happen.

But its focus is not restricted to the National Park’s planning concerns. Many of the themes and project aspirations set out here are the responsibility of West Dunbartonshire Council or of the community itself.

The plan is being led jointly by the Kilmaronock Community Council and the Kilmaronock Community Trust and has been developed by a steering group of local people, drawing on individuals representing a wide range of local interests and perspectives including the community council and trust, the Millennium Hall management committee, the Old Kirk Trust, School & Parents Association, Farmers, Young Farmers & the local Heritage Society.

Validation of the final draft will be done by the National Park and a copy submitted to West Dunbartonshire Council and all elected members and associated Community Councils.

2. What We Did



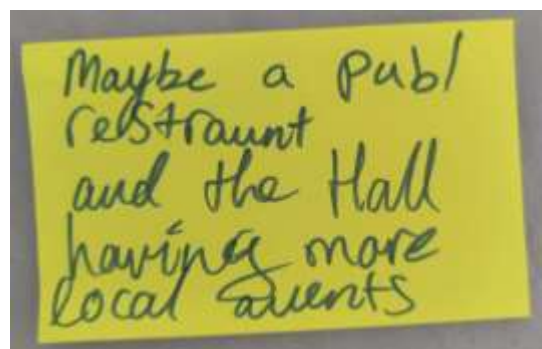
The results of this Place Plan are rooted in a long history of listening to the community. The existing Community Action Plan had some actions where progress had to be re-assessed in a new way. The Steering Group pulled these issues together to form the basis of the first round of consultations, a community wide survey distributed widely on and offline.

Questionnaires were sent to every household in the KCC area as identified on a list provided by West Dunbartonshire Council and an online version was posted on the village website. Awareness of the questionnaire was raised using the Gartocharn Community Facebook page, local WhatsApp groups, and posters.

76 questionnaires were completed which represented about 25% of households.

The analysis of responses formed the basis of a public consultation event which was held in the Millennium Hall, in March. Approximately 35 people attended throughout the day to enter into a conversation about the nature of the community and priorities for change. The feedback during

this event was much more



conversational and ideas and suggestions were captured on post-it notes. Participants also allocated **stars** to indicate which issues were of highest importance to them.

A separate questionnaire was sent to local organisations & businesses. The response rate was around 30% which is disappointingly low given their importance as landowners and employers.

We spent time with the local school children to ensure that children's views were fed into the ideas. A special meeting was arranged by the community council to present and discuss the findings.

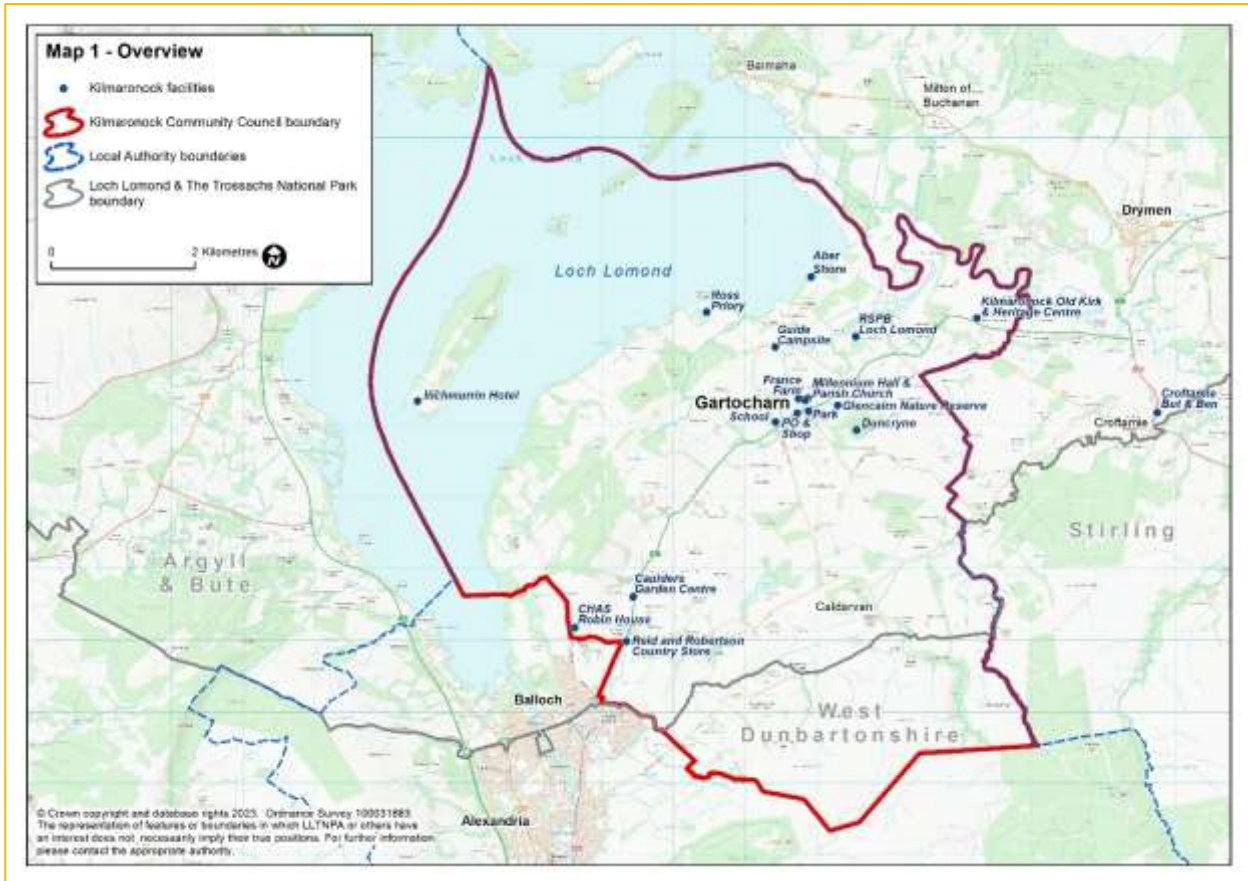




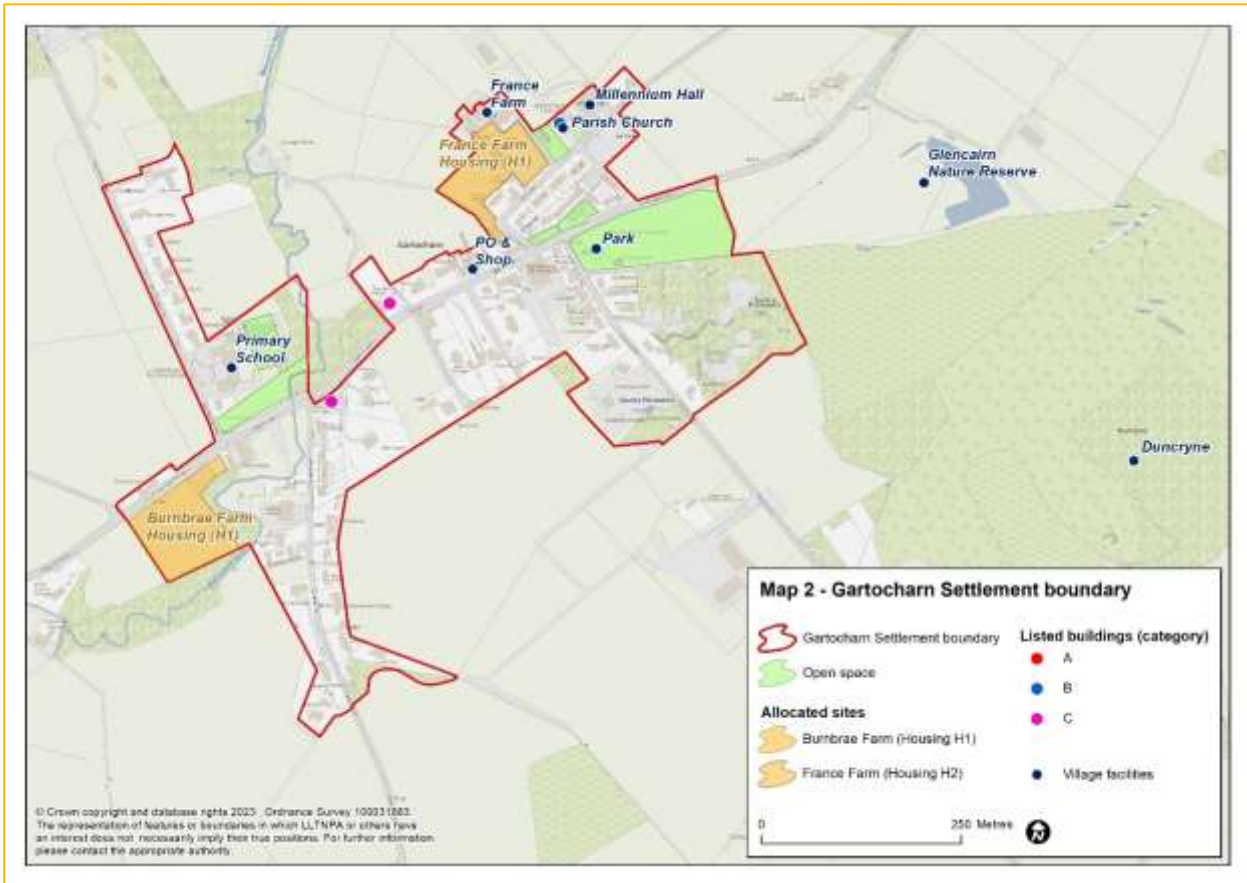
3. The Nature of our Place

3.1 Where We Are

The maps below indicate the boundary line of this Local Place Plan followed by different maps of the community.



Map 1 - Boundary Map



Map 2 - Gartocharn Village Envelope (as of current Local Development Plan 2016)

Kilmarnock is the only rural community in West Dunbartonshire. It is predominantly an agricultural area on the fringes of urban Scotland. It has close links with Drymen and Croftamie in Stirlingshire as well as with the Vale of Leven and Balloch and it has a lot in common with other rural areas in the National Park, although it is close to the Park boundary .

At the 2011 census 45% of residents lived in detached houses, 51% live in semi-detached/terraced, with only 4% living in flats/apartments which is very different to the Scottish averages. There are 8 properties for social rent in the Kilmarnock community council area, all in the village with the likely need for more to be built as there are challenges for young people and young families seeking accommodation. Only 0.6% of properties are recorded as 2nd homes, and 1.5% of the housing stock is designated as long-term empty. It is estimated that there are 26 holiday lets in the area.

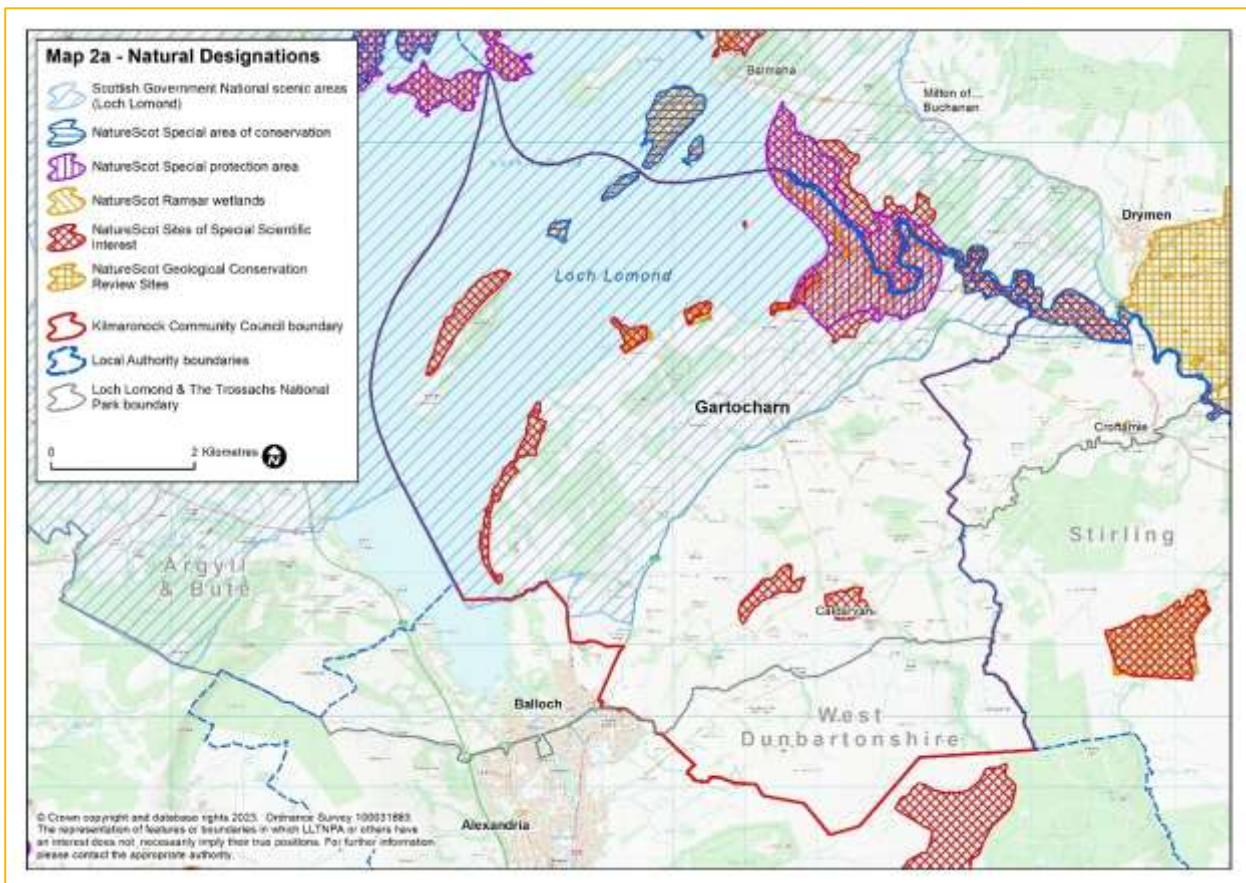
The main settlement in the area is Gartocharn, which sits either side of the busy A811 road that runs from Balloch, at the south end of Loch Lomond, to Stirling. The village has a thriving primary school and nursery, a children’s playground and football pitch, a local shop, post office and garage, France Farm - a well-used farm shop operating one day a week, an active church, a fine community hall but the community is affected by the traffic on the main road through its centre and has recently lost what had been a pub, and then a restaurant, at its centre.

To the north of the main road the old community of Aber spreads down to the shores of the loch and Boturich sits close to the border with Balloch. To the south are more homes and farms along the backroads to Croftamie and up towards the Kilpatrick hills. The largest group on this side is around the old Caldaran Station.

Inchmurrin, one of the larger islands in Loch Lomond, lies within the community boundary and is home to a pub/restaurant and holiday accommodation.

Although many of the working age residents work at home or commute, there are several enterprises in the community : farms, tourist accommodation, a haulier, an earth working machine contractor, a garden centre, an equestrian and agricultural supplier and a builders' merchant. The University of Strathclyde owns Ross Priory, a substantial house and gardens, on the shore of Loch Lomond. There are areas of managed woodland owned by Forest and Land Scotland and The Woodland Trust

Overall, the landscape is a mixture of farmland, rough grazing, open moor, and mixed woodland. The loch side location provides a fine landscape and significant areas of scientific interest. A number of these are formally designated under Scottish, UK-wide, and international legislation: we have a RAMSAR site, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area for birds (SPA) and several Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the community boundary. These are shown on Map 2a.



Map 2a – Natural Designations

There are several open spaces here that are either managed for nature or are open moorland or grassland where anyone can walk and enjoy the natural environment. Examples include Ross Priory Woods (Forestry & Land Scotland), Whinney Hill (Woodland Trust), The Dumpling (privately owned), RSPB Loch Lomond reserve and access to the Kilpatrick Hills via the John Muir Way. All these are used by locals and people from further afield and all share the same issues of lack of public transport or active access. For landowners there is also a risk of occasional inappropriate visitor behaviour. While we clearly appreciate the availability of such places, a balance needs to be achieved between accessibility and sustainable management consistent with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. We encourage further co-operation between managers of these places and the farming and residential community to facilitate wildlife corridors, the tackling of invasive non-native species and for sustainable access.

The Parish Church for Kilmarnock Gartocharn is next to the Millennium Hall with regular Sunday Services. In addition, Kilmarnock Old Kirk sits some two miles from the village, on the side of the main road to Drymen. It is being restored by a community trust as a heritage and community centre and is being used for some services and music events until the refurbishment is completed. It will provide a sustainable heritage centre for the community and visitors, complementary to the Millennium Hall.

3.2 Who We Are

The population at 2011 census was 1423 people. The small area population projection data shows that there has been a 1% decline in total population, alongside a marked reduction in working age population with related increase in older people of 33.9%. This creates both opportunities with experienced retirees along with imminent challenges in relation to care for isolated older people.

KCC data zones	Total	Young	Work age	Older
2011	1423	192	930	301
2021	1396	190	803	403
% change	-1.9%	-1.0%	-15.8%	33.9%

Source - Population Estimates 2011-2021

This is not an area of significant deprivation. 2% of pensioners live in poverty compared with a 12% average across Scotland. Only 0.8% claim unemployment benefit compared with 3.2% across the country and there are no universal credit claimants. Although there are no areas of multiple deprivation the whole area is recognised as having low geographical access to services due to rurality.

Though 33% are in full time employment compared with a national average of 40%, that will be due to the higher than average number of older people. 24% of the population are over 65 compared to a Scottish average of 19% and there are fewer people of working age and fewer children. Only 9% of households are families with dependent children compared to 28% across Scotland.

This is not a very mixed community with only 6 non-white people at the last census.

There are good levels of health and wellbeing and fewer than average numbers of people on benefits such as Personal Independence Payments. 15.8% say they have a limiting long term illness compared with a national average of 19.6%.

Pupil attainment and educational levels are strong.

However more people than average (12% vs 9%) provide unpaid care.

The energy efficiency rating for buildings is relatively low due to majority of housing stock being pre-war sandstone buildings requiring the retro-fitting of insulation in order to reach Net Zero.

4. What People Told us and Our Plan

4.1 Our Vision For The Future

From the consultation responses a strong vision of the future for the Kilmarnock and Gartocharn community emerges. This is not a vision which just addresses challenges and gaps, but one that values and builds on the community's strengths. Following the 10 years of this place plan;

Our community will be welcoming and inclusive, a safe and affordable place for people of all ages and backgrounds to live, work, bring up their children and grow old with accessible services and a mutually supportive environment. We will have a valued local environment and will have made substantial progress in implementing a just transition to Net Zero.

4.2 Values and Principles

This plan is not just a list of projects, it is a statement about the kind of community we want, the nature of relationships we will develop and how we will implement the projects.

1. **National Park Principles** : We welcome the National Park's core principles and aims and look forward to working together within these positive parameters, which are strengthened under the NPF4 principles.
2. **Local by Default** : All future decisions affecting our community should be founded on authentic consultation.
3. **Accessible** : All services and facilities, green spaces and initiatives are for everyone, regardless of their circumstances.
4. **Collaborative** : We are committed to developing all projects in genuine and productive partnership both within and outwith our community.
5. **Sustainable** : Everything we do will be guided by economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

4.3 Priority Themes For Action

The responses and engagement of residents have helped us identify the challenges that we have in achieving this vision, and the actions we should undertake to work towards achieving that vision.

They require combinations of actions by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority, West Dunbartonshire Council, other agencies, and by the community itself. The following six themes for action are drawn from the consultation responses, reflections of the history and nature of community issues, and a consideration of appropriate next steps.

- A Safe and Accessible Place
- A Linked-up Place
- A Climate Friendly Place with a Sustainable Environment
- A Family Centred Place
- A Place with Excellent Facilities
- A Living and Vibrant Place

1. A Safe and Accessible Place

The Local Situation

There is a range of road types within Kilmarnock, and each have their own challenges. The A811 (the Old Military Road) is the main road through the village with a speed limit transitioning from 60 mph to 30 mph within the village and back to 60 mph on leaving. In Gartocharn, the houses are very close to the road leaving narrow footways for pedestrians. There is one light controlled pedestrian crossing at the western edge near the school. Footways out with the village envelope are either non-existent, overgrown, narrow or otherwise inadequate for pedestrian use.

Ross Loan, School Rd, Church Road, Duncryne Terrace and Duncryne Road are the main residential streets particularly as they join the A811 main road. These are single track narrow roads in the main.

Ross Loan and Mill Loan form a single track horseshoe around the north of the village with occasional passing places and farm gate entrances. Ross Loan has speed bumps outside the Primary School and narrow pedestrian footways where houses prevail. There are various sub-communities based around the horseshoe particularly near the loch. A caravan and campervan park is situated to the northeast of the horseshoe apex.

Finally, what are known as the back roads are also single track C-roads with occasional passing places and farm gate entrances. Though this is predominantly farmland there is also some housing interspersed with the farms. Part of the C-roads are designated as a National Cycle Route (NCN 7) and a long distance path (The John Muir Way). Some roads and tracks have been designated as Core Paths but they do not form a clear network in the area.

There is an overall feeling of safety expressed by residents. Neighbourhood use of WhatsApp Groups keeps people informed and able to express issues.

The top identified issue was **speeding traffic** both on A811 in the village and on the outer C-roads. This affects pedestrians of all ages and parents with small children or pushchairs, whether walking on the pavement or trying to cross the road at desire-points such as the Village Shop, bus stops and the play park. The narrowness of the pavement, often further narrowed by overgrown hedges, serves to heighten the fear of the passing traffic, particularly large vehicles and lorries. There are no safe crossing points at locations such as village shop, bus stops or play field. On the C-roads, the traffic levels are enough to cause conflict between vehicles and cyclists or equestrians. When there are problems on the A811, the back roads are used as a diversion but are not suitable for heavy traffic or large vehicles. Not only are there vehicles exceeding the speed limits on the A811, but there is also a common view that the speed limits themselves are too high on both the A811 and parts of the back roads.

The second priority concern raised was **road surface condition**. Despite past work bringing most of the roads up to a good standard, some areas have not been repaired and some roads (Auchincarroch Rd in particular) and some verges have been left in a poor state by utility companies.

The third priority concern is **parking**. Pavement parking on residential roads hinders the safe passage of pedestrians particularly those with push chairs. This hindrance forces pedestrians to walk in the road. Parking in passing places and in the lay-by at Duncryne Terrace was also raised often blocking the area needed for Ambulance services and for disabled residents. At school pick up time, parking at the school end of Ross Loan causes congestion issues. Similarly, at the play park end of Duncryne Road, cars park anywhere they can to be close to the play park. There is good parking near the Millennium Hall.

The fourth priority concern is **flooding**. This tends to happen at the same spots on A811 but also on Church Rd. Along Duncryne Terrace the floods can get so bad as to ingress into property. The underlying cause of flooding needs to be addressed.

The fifth priority concern relates to the **remoteness of rural roads**. Late night activity includes Anti-Social Behaviour such as drug use and motorbike racing. Rural crime is prevalent such as poaching and theft from farms. Fly tipping is a common crime.

Projects to Address these Issues

A safe and accessible place

We will live in a place that has safe and effective infrastructure with good traffic management

Projects

Lobbying to reduce traffic speed through the village by limiting in the main village centre to 20 mph, creating traffic calming measures on Main Street and installing traffic cameras

Installing a light controlled crossing over A811 between Duncryne Terrace and the play park to allow safe crossing

Create more passing places and extend/elongate the existing ones on 'C' roads and add "No Parking" signs to passing places

Create more authorised parking spaces with EV chargers at the hall car park

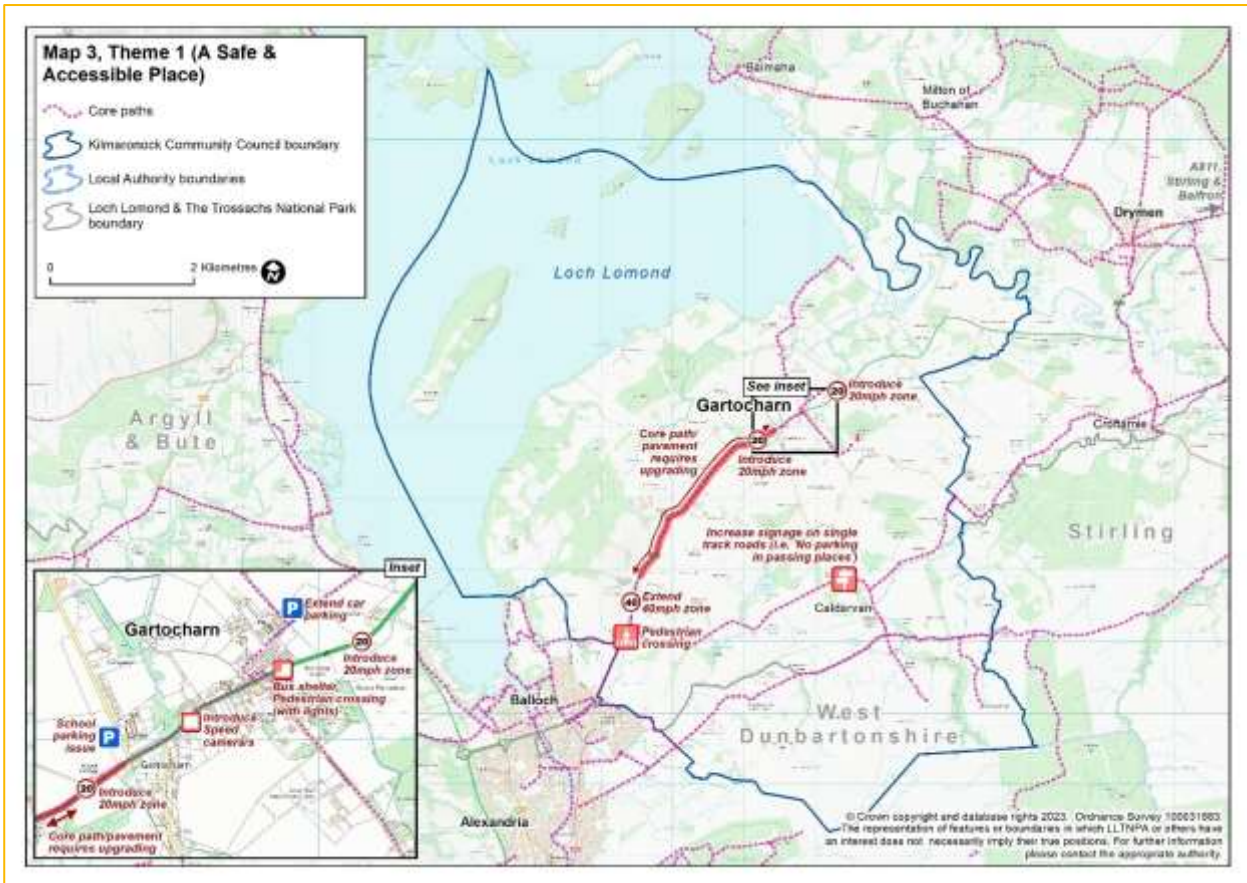
Create safe cycle routes

Safe walking route from the school/nursery to the Millennium Hall.

A new bus stop with bus shelter at the East End of the village by the football field
Reinstatement of the footway/pavement alongside the A811 between Ballagan and Gartocharn
NCN7 & John Muir Way : Improve safety of cyclists and walkers crossing the A811 at Reid & Robertson by installation of a light controlled crossing.

Implementation Plan

- KCC to discuss details of proposed pedestrian crossing with WDC and residents of Duncryne Terrace.
- KCC to discuss speed solutions with WDC & Police Scotland
- KCC to liaise with Police Scotland regarding Anti-Social Behaviour and rural crime prevention
- KCC to discuss pavement parking with residents before talking to WDC.
- Residents to identify hot-spots of Passing Place abuse, KCC to liaise with residents on which Passing Places to extend or location of additional ones. KCC to lobby WDC for delivery.
- KCC to discuss with WDC the diligence on checking utility repairs are completed to good standard and verges made good and maintained.
- KMHA to explore funding for the implementation of EV charging points
- KCT to work with the National Park and local authority to secure funding for pathways and cycle paths.
- KCC to continue to work with WDC regarding safe use of the footway along the A811



Map 3 - Theme 1 : A Safe & Accessible Place

The Local Situation

There is an issue with public transport service frequency and how it suits different people, particularly commuters.

Many people recognise that Public Transport is a solution to CO2 reductions versus car use and something that must be invested in. Improved services would benefit the mobility of visitors, clearly breaking dependency on cars, congestion and car parking.

Connectivity within the locality is an issue. Because the back roads are not suitable for larger buses thought needs to be given to how to connect the outlying areas to the core village.

Connectivity outwith the locality is also a problem. Connections to the rail service at Balloch for example are poorly co-ordinated. Connections to Stirling are very challenging. A common issue raised was the lack of connections to the east in general with Drymen, Croftamie & Balfron.

Bus stops need to be carefully considered. Sheltered waiting areas would be welcomed but this may create issues with maintenance, litter and anti-social behaviour.

The school bus is a regular bus (twice a day) that takes school kids to school, but people can jump on, pay their fare and go to Balfron or any of the villages it goes through on its way to Balfron.

What People Told Us

Though there was an understanding that rural communities do normally lack public transport, there is actually a need to enhance the service to create opportunities for tourists, and to reduce our carbon footprint. There was a demand for new electric vehicles.

There were suggestions that the current 309 bus service should be enhanced and the buses should link with the train in Balloch sufficiently to allow people to get to work.

Some people asked for shelters and bus-stops, and a small number felt there should be more stops. Some think there should be buses stopping on demand and an enhanced stop at the play park.

Respondents were looking for more routes-especially to Stirling and Balfron so that teenagers could meet friends.

Other suggestions were for a funded car share scheme and a local taxi service.

As a topic, Footpaths and Cycleways attracted a high proportion of respondents. 62% of those replies felt action or their presence was a high priority, 35% said they were good to have and only 3% regarded them as unnecessary.

There were 92 comments made regarding footpaths and cycleways half of which concerned the existing pavements. Specific and regular mention was made of the state of the pavement along the A811 to Balloch being poorly maintained and dangerous. Similarly, the pavement along Church Road which is in a poor state of repair. Many feel the South pavement through the village is too narrow with hedges overgrown. Flooding is an issue at the pedestrian crossing and in the lay-by to the front of Duncryne Terrace.

Parking on the pavement is an area of concern particularly in front of the shop.

There was very clear and robust support for the rebuilding of Aber Bridge with disappointment expressed that the National Park has not managed to resolve this issue.

The pavement from Balloch to Ballagan has been recently resurfaced and is now fit for purpose, however, there is no continuous, useable, pavement beyond this point linking to Gartocharn.

Projects to Address these Issues

A Linked-up Place

This will be a place where getting about is easy, environmentally friendly and affordable

Projects

Advocate for a bus that connects Balloch and Balfron/Stirling and enhance bus connectivity across the region

Lobby for smarter bus times to link to train times at Balloch

Create a safe network of walking routes from Gartocharn to Drymen and also to Balloch, with side routes e.g. from the junction of Church Road and Mill Loan to the War Memorial and to the Old Kirk. Link routes could be made to the RSPB site and the metal bridge.

Repair and restore Aber Path Bridge

Explore the possibility of a new pathway from the corner of Church Road to the school grounds.

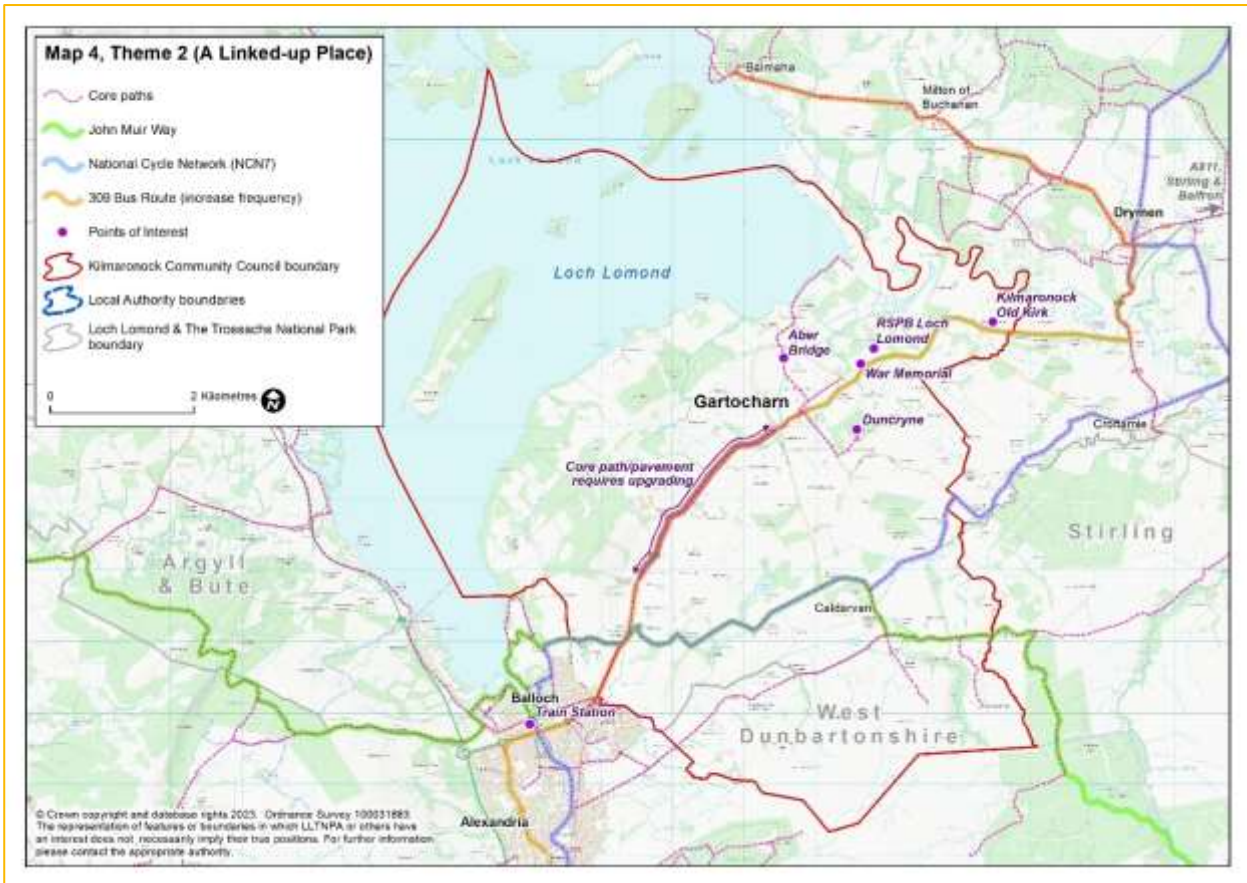
Initiate a car sharing scheme

Access to a village controlled shared electric vehicle

Regular maintenance of pavements and hedges

Implementation Plan

- Establish a dialogue with SPT on adding a bus stop at the play park in conjunction with further consultation on specific project of a crossing and bus stop opposite Duncryne Terrace
- Initiate a detailed survey into transport including with neighbouring villages. Further work should be done with residents about the level of community interest in car share, community transport etc.
- Establish a diverse community transport scheme.
- Re-open dialogue with Sustrans, LLTNPA, and WDC about active travel.
- Consider setting up local work parties to address hedge and other environmental maintenance.
- Engage in further discussion, led by KCC and KCT working together and involving the community, over how best to facilitate walking routes to Balloch and Drymen and to the Old Kirk and War Memorial taking into account the interests of landowners and residents as well as walkers.
- Where preferred routes are determined, KCT to work with the National Park and local authority to secure funding for pathways and cycle paths.
- KCT to work with the KMH to secure an electric car for shared use in the community.



Map 4 - Theme 2 : A Linked Up Place

3 A Climate Friendly Place with a Sustainable Environment

The Local Situation

Net Zero

The Scottish Government Emission targets (Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019) has articulated the concept of the climate emergency and a need for “transformative change”. With an increasing focus on this as a cross cutting theme in Government this is resulting in new policy areas and funding streams from Government and other bodies such as the Lottery distributors.

This commits to a just transition to Net Zero where everyone, regardless of circumstances can be part of that journey. This is new to all communities such as Kilmarnock but a key priority.

Litter and recycling

Several village litter picks were organised prior to the ‘Covid years’, many residents are active litter pickers. The Council is responsible for litter removal along the A811.

The bottle banks at the Co-op store in Balloch and at the garden centre, both well used by local residents, have recently been removed. Other bottle banks remain in Balloch and in Alexandria, and a comprehensive recycling centre is provided at Dalmoak.

What People Told Us

79% of respondents said that addressing the climate, environment and nature crises is a priority. Help is needed for individuals to better understand the issues and options and enable good decisions to be made locally.

The main areas of concern that people have are :

Homes, Heating & power : Many recognize the urgent need to move from fossil-based fuel (in Kilmarnock that’s mainly oil-fired boilers) to a greener alternative, but don’t have a clear view of the alternative options and for many the costs are a concern. Planning and building control can mandate eco-friendly solutions for new builds but retro-fitting new solutions to older homes isn’t usually easy or cheap and in some cases conflicts with Listed Building guidance. A small number of respondents continue to resist a move from oil-fired solutions for ideological or practical reasons.

Improving poor insulation is a significant issue for many properties.

Transport : At present most residents see little alternative to the continuing use of (mostly) petrol & diesel fueled cars for most journeys. As a rural area with poor public transport and lack of safe wheeling routes, this is unsurprising.

Recycling : We’d all like to do more by way of re-purposing / re-using / re-cycling (and reducing waste in the first place). There is a lack of recycling facilities and uncertainty about what materials can be recycled (and how) and a level of suspicion that “it all ends up in landfill anyway”. Better information is needed and local options made available.

Flooding : People have concerns about local flooding e.g. from fields and burns as well as Loch Lomond, River Endrick and Sea level impacts.

Kilmarnock would like to become a Net Zero community. We already have a Net Zero farm and there are some Net Zero homes. There are proposed sites for community solar installations. The proposed Wind Farm on the Kilpatrick Hills faces some resistance on environmental grounds due to destruction of peatbogs but that may be reduced if there’s a clear community benefit such as cheaper electricity and a community fund.

There was a total of 57 responses on the subject of recycling in the questionnaire that all households received. 79% of those responses said that care and maintenance of the local environment was of High Priority.

Considerable concern was expressed over the noxious smell from the Auchencarroch Landfill Site, which often affected the areas down wind of the site.

During the open consultation in the Millennium Hall, there were five stars set against 'better re-cycling and battery and bottle banks'. There were a further four stars set against 'litter picks and bins'.

There were comments on the litter on verges on all roads surrounding Gartocharn and on the hedges alongside footpaths in the village being kept cut back more.

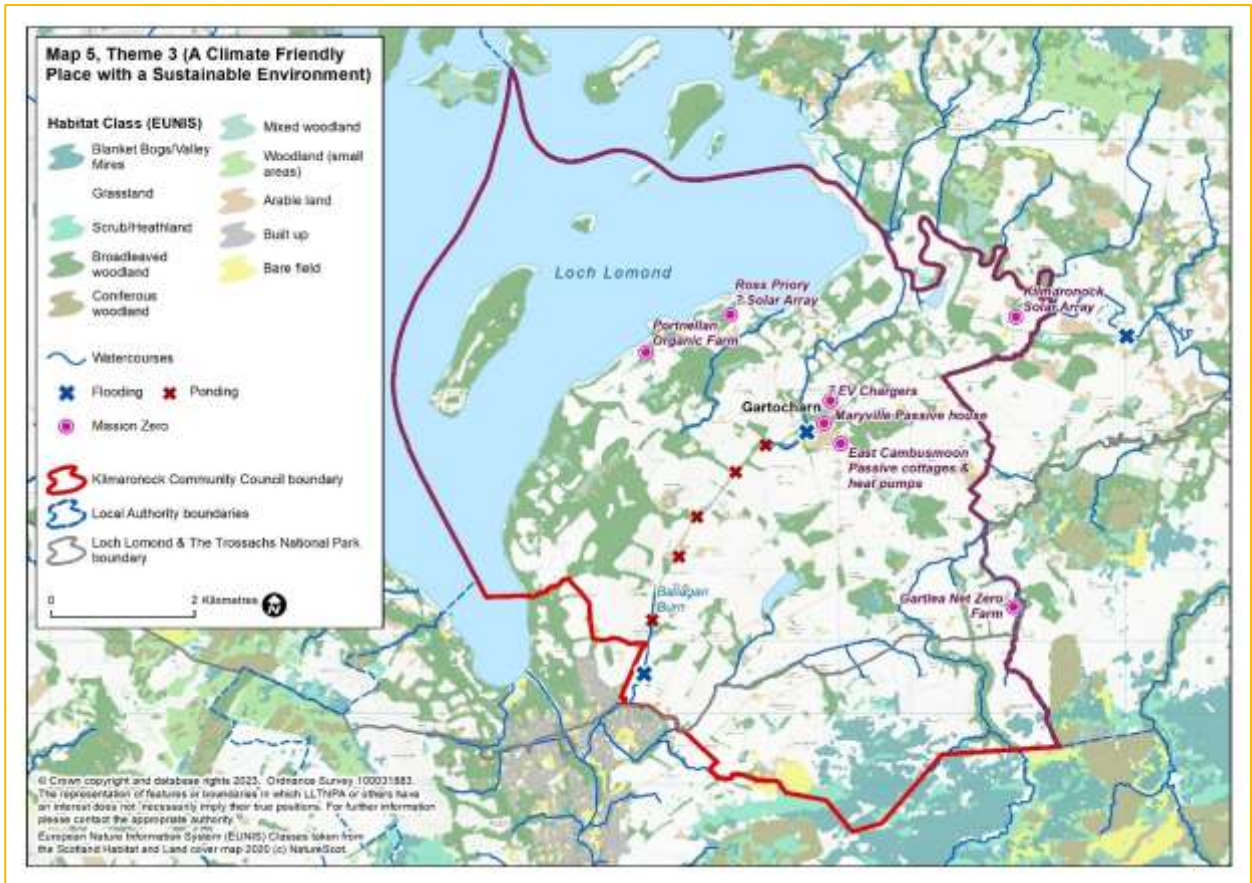
Projects to Address these Issues

A Climate Friendly Place with a Sustainable Environment	
We will be a place that is at the forefront of Net Zero communities benefitting everyone. There is a nuance between the drive to Net Zero and the desire to protect our environment but these are under a single theme because they are intrinsically linked in a nature based solution to Net Zero.	
Net Zero	<p>Projects</p> <p>We will establish a way of sharing knowledge and experience to help organisations, the community and individuals convert appropriately to new energy solutions.</p> <p>We will explore the possibility of a publicly available EV charging point in the hall car park</p> <p>Establish an active travel hub with e-bike hire for local people and visitors</p> <p>Initiate more extensive and smarter waste collection facilities for glass, clothing, batteries, toys etc. with better information on how to recycle.</p> <p>Establish a food grower's collective where local residents can share the produce they grow</p> <p>Resurrect the annual Village Show with a section dedicated to local produce</p> <p>Nature based solutions should be included in any calculations towards Net Zero</p>
Biodiversity and the environment	<p>Projects</p> <p>Consideration of the causes of flooding and feasibility study to look into mitigation schemes and contingency plans (e.g. when A811 at Drymen bridge closed again).</p> <p>Establish appropriate flood mitigation schemes.</p> <p>Improve drainage around the existing pedestrian crossing, in front of Duncryne Terrace and at the bottom of School Road to reduce flooding.</p>

	<p>Control invasive non-native species and extend an understanding of local biodiversity</p> <p>Information campaign to protect and learn about the designated areas locally</p> <p>Investigate potential increase of designated areas e.g. expansion to include River Endrick tributaries</p> <p>Draw on the strength of commitment to biodiversity, and the expertise available within the community, to establish a working group. The group would work to develop a fuller understanding of the biodiversity in the area, and promote projects to protect it</p>
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Implementation Plan

- Create a community Net Zero group, to share understanding and practical experience of steps to reduce household and business carbon footprints
- Explore options for community promotion of EV chargers in the village
- Explore car-sharing opportunities
- KCC to discuss flood mitigation with Local Authorities (WDC & Stirling) and encourage them to commission a flood mitigation study & to engage with farmers about reduction of flooding from fields.
- Feasibility study into a village wide renewable energy scheme.
- Research a costed plan for sustainable community led transport as well as funding for a demonstration project.
- Request WDC to provide facilities for glass recycling in the village, if the Community can agree on a site.
- Discuss the possibility of a battery recycling facility with the village shop owner.
- Ask KCC, WDC, and Community Police, to co-ordinate an annual litter-pick. Request WDC Greenspace to provide more frequent litter picking on A811.



Map 5 – Theme 3 : A Climate Friendly Place with a Sustainable Environment

The Local Situation

The area has one primary school, Gartocharn Primary & Nursery but limited additional childcare facilities. Gartocharn Primary & Nursery is currently a healthy and thriving non-denominational school and ELC. It caters for up to 100 children in the school, and up to 30 children at one time in the nursery. It currently has 89 children in the school, and 38 in the nursery. 38 pupils (43%) at the school currently reside in the catchment area, with 51 pupils (57%) living outside it.

There are excellent outdoor facilities at the Gartocharn campus, including a superb astro-turf pitch (also available for community use) and a forest school area, complete with a cabin for outdoor learning. It is a School of Excellence in Outdoor Learning with Green Flag Eco-School status, and works closely with local partners such as the RSPB, National Park, WDC Balloch Park Rangers, and RHET. There is currently no provision of after-school care. Pre-Covid, there was an after-school club run by volunteer parents which met Mon-Thurs 3-5pm in the Kilmarnock Millennium Hall. It was popular, but proved difficult to run, with only two families volunteering, meaning two days per week running it per family. Those families decided against running it again due to lack of other parent volunteers and it being too onerous a task. Despite interest, lack of parent support meant that this has not continued.

The nursery looks after children aged 6 weeks to 5 years. Hours for children up to 3 years old are 8:30am – 4:30pm, 52 weeks a year excluding Christmas. Hours for 3-5 year-olds are 8:30am – 2:30pm, termtime only.

West Dunbartonshire Council does not accommodate any after-school care at Gartocharn and there is no statutory duty on local authorities in Scotland to do so, although they do have the power to provide such care. Lack of funding, together with insurance and liability responsibilities all mean that WDC feels it cannot provide after-school care at Gartocharn. It was investigated by the school in recent times, and the conclusion was that it needs to be a private care organisation. Areas of high deprivation might be the only places to get after-school care provided by the Council.

At school pick-up time, there is limited parking at the school grounds, and cars queue along Ross Loan to turn into the drop-off/pick-up zone. There is a danger of cars wanting to turn off the A811 onto Ross Loan being stuck on the main road due to the queue. The school is doing as much as it can, and has been trying to improve the situation by changing the pick-up time to be from 3 - 3:10pm for traffic easing. The school has also been getting information out to parents and carers not to queue on the A811 via leaflets, Seesaw messages, posters, and even a video.

For children walking to school, the current situation is that they must navigate much of the journey along the main road, with only one safe crossing point available, that happens to be in a place that floods whenever there is rain.

There is a school bus available for school-age children living within the catchment area and over 2 miles from the school (or 1 mile if there are no safe walking routes). 17 school pupils currently use this service - but many pupils commute from Balloch, so the bus service does not include them.

The school has an astro-turf pitch that is available for the whole community to use. The community can also book the school gym after school hours if they wish. There is a good relationship between the village community and the school.

Regarding secondary schools, most school leavers go on to either Balfron High or Vale of Leven Academy (VOLA). There seems to have been a higher percentage that go to Balfron over the last few years. The figures for school leavers in 2023 are that 9 are going to Balfron, and 3 to VOLA.

The future of Gartocharn Primary and Nursery looks secure for now. Two new Heads have just been appointed to both the School and Nursery, and WDC has just invested £40,000 in 2023 towards getting part of the Nursery garden updated. The Care Inspectorate always gives very good reports on the campus, and it seems to be a sought-after place to send children to, with a large number of pupils

coming from the Balloch area. With a planned increase in governmental childcare funding, there will be a need to keep as many places open as possible.

What People Told Us

Gartocharn Primary & Nursery is highly valued by residents including those who use it and those who do not. Both acknowledge its importance in attracting people to the village, and appreciate the facilities available to all residents, such as the John Young community pitch. One mentioned the school as being “important to the vitality of the village.” Several respondents highlighted the school as one of the things they most liked about living in the area, whilst more respondents (12%) highlighted it as something they would most want to keep in the area. A response from the nearby RSPB Loch Lomond reserve noted the “great relationship with the local Primary School who support us with our work and hopefully also gain great benefit from being near to an RSPB site.”

However, there were many comments regarding the lack of after-school care and limited nursery hours. Many people feel that better childcare provision would help parents work and contribute to the local economy. One response under the “Access” header mentioned that not having access to after-school childcare “is a reason people will leave the area or not move to the area” and mentioned their family will “probably have to move” because of this, as they cannot afford to have one parent not working. There were also comments on the shorter nursery hours particularly once a child turns 3, being incompatible with full-time working hours.

All comments on the school & nursery and need for better after-school care were intertwined through various sections of the survey, including the economy, play areas, transport, social interaction, feeling of influence, usage, access, traffic, and pathways –seeming to highlight the reach of the school & nursery within the village. Some respondents noted the positive social impact the school & nursery have in opening up community connections. Whilst some respondents were aware of the community pitch at the school being available to the village community, there were a couple of comments that suggested they were not aware of this.

Many responses mentioned the busy traffic on the A811 and the lack of safe pathways to school being a worry for them regarding children. This also extended to high school children, and the mention of bus shelters and safe off-road cycle paths to the Endrick villages, as well as to our primary school & nursery was suggested. There were 21 comments regarding the traffic situation at school pick-up time, with potentially dangerous congestion on the A811, and the lack of sufficient parking at the school.

Projects to Address these Issues

A Family Centred Place

We will be a place where people want to stay and bring up their families because there is a child friendly infrastructure of services and facilities

Projects

A feasibility study into innovative community led after-school care provisions should be implemented with a view to establishing a sustainable pre and after school provision beyond the statutory minimum.

Address the parking issue at the school

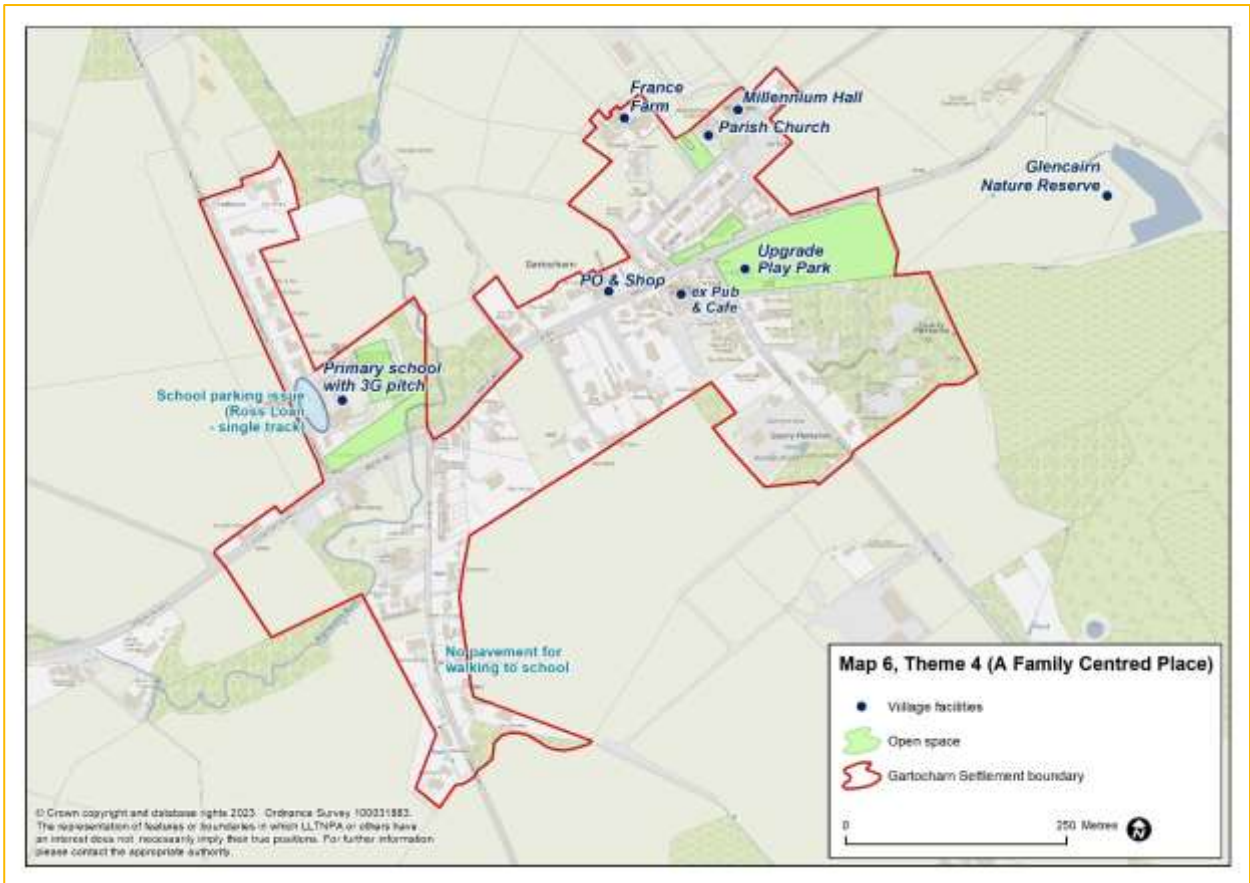
Encourage active travel to the school with safe routes

Find a way to create affordable housing for families to increase local take-up of places at school

Resurrect the annual Village Show with a section dedicated to children's projects

Implementation Plan

- Better signage should be delivered by WDC
- Meetings should take place with WDC to discuss options.



Map 6 – Theme 4 : A Family Centred Place

The Local Situation

Many urban places are using the concept of 15 (or 20) minute neighbourhoods to assess which of a number of desirable facilities and services are available within a short walk. In rural communities such as ours, this is not so appropriate and largely we accept that we will not achieve a high score. Nevertheless, the methodology behind such concepts can still be applied to establish which of the "missing" facilities we would value most and in helping with prioritisation.

The Kilmarnock Millenium Hall is a venue for Friday coffee mornings, parties, weddings, ceilidhs, concerts, meetings as well as hosting the following group activities : The Heritage Group, Yoga, Tai Chi, Frayed Edges Sewing, B Flats choir, Ukulele Group, Gardening, SWI and Young Farmers. It also has an "honesty" library. There were requests for more fitness classes, adult education, art club, community garden, walking group, bridle paths, cycle paths, walking routes, tennis courts, ceilidhs and community cinema. The primary school has a badminton club for adults. WhatsApp groups for Aber and Backroads communities help keep residents in touch. Gartocharn Community has a Facebook page used to advertise forthcoming events and send messages but we have no specific organised activities for young people.

The football pitch has been upgraded and levelled but parking is a big issue. This may be resolved with new parking at Glencairn nature reserve.

The play park flooding needs to be resolved and equipment needs to be upgraded. It is suggested that the slide be replaced, and a zip wire, willow tunnels, sandpit, picnic benches and public toilet are introduced.

Regarding a public toilet there have been proposals to offer the use of KMH foyer toilets for a fee or for building a new self-cleaning W.C. or installing toilets at the changing rooms by the playground.

Access to the play park needs to be made safer.

The Old Kirk is a valued venue and it is a priority to complete the fundraising process and finish off the restoration. This will result in a sustainable heritage centre for the community and visitors.

What People Told Us

Access to Facilitated Amenities in Kilmarnock was considered a high priority by 54% and good to have by 41% of the 56 respondents. It got 12 stars.

50% of the 94 comments related to the lack of a pub / cafe in the village. The loss of the House of Darroch (formerly The Hungry Monk / The Gartocharn Hotel) was regretted by many residents. Some home based workers expressed an interest in a community hub.

Access to healthcare was a concern for the elderly and infirm without a car. It was suggested we have a health care facility in KMH on a Friday morning and as a community we should support the services of nearby VOLH.

A Public Toilet was requested for the village and play park by a third of respondents. The recent closure of the House of Darroch and previous public toilet, in about 2009, has led to the loss of this facility. More than once KMH car park has been used as a toilet. Perhaps KMH could arrange access to their facilities for a fee. In the report back from the previous action plan there was one star allocated for a public toilet.

Opportunities for Social Contact and Belonging was considered a high priority by 46% and good to have by 48% of the 52 respondents.

The lack of informal meeting venues was raised by many (12 stars). KMH was acknowledged as a great asset, especially the Friday coffee morning run by volunteers. It was suggested it could be a commercial venture to provide a daytime coffee shop. Over a quarter of respondents are actively

involved in the variety of group activities in KMH but more classes were requested. There is general feeling that there is a good community spirit but some working parents and people on their own find it difficult to find the time or the inclination to join in with village activities. Some also find such gatherings poorly advertised and intimidating.

Backroads and Aber WhatsApp groups are helpful in getting to know neighbours and share information

Play and Recreation Opportunities was considered a high priority by 25% and good to have by 75% of the 56 respondents.

The village has a play park, football pitch and nearby golf course at Ross Priory.

KMH offers a variety of group activities but 10% of respondents would like additional evening fitness and adult education classes and after school gym for teenagers.

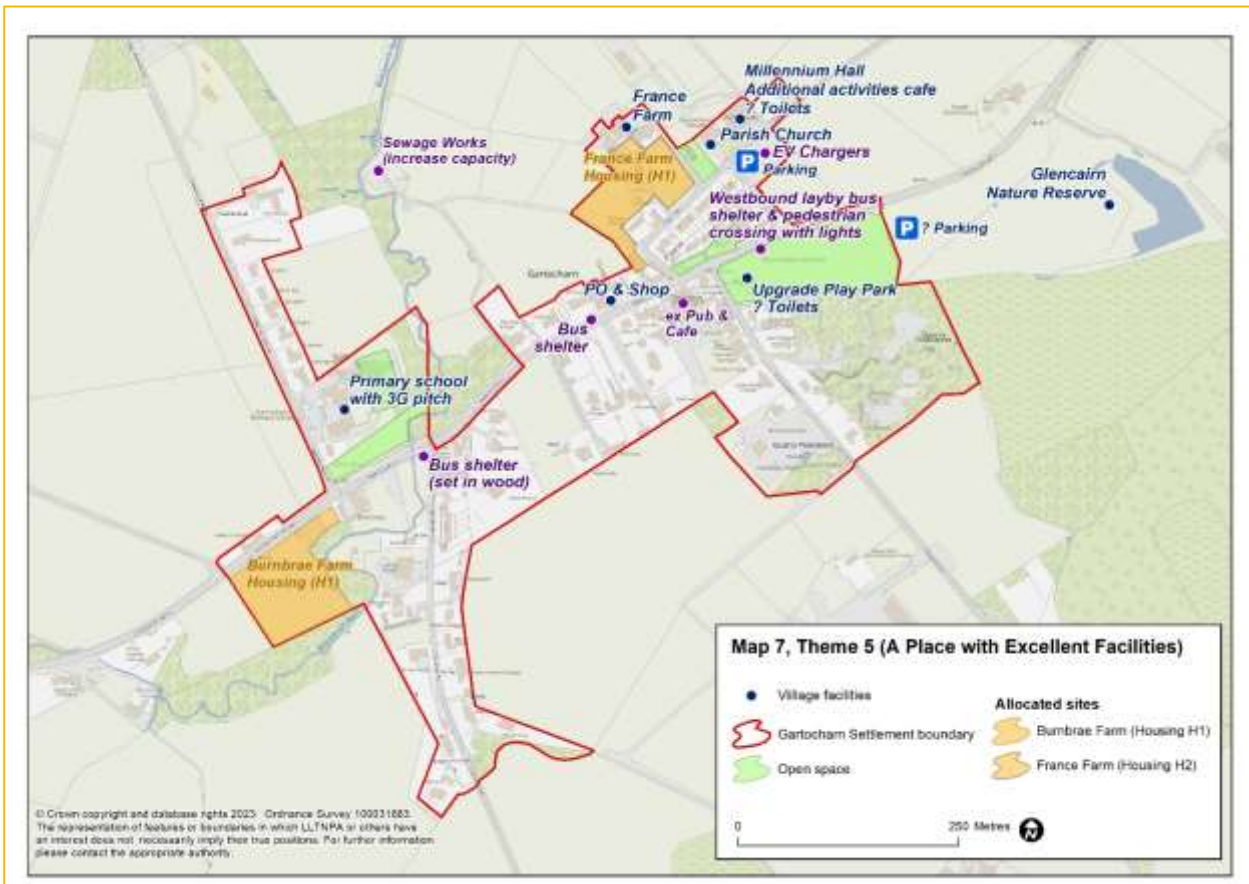
Projects to Address these Issues

A Place with Excellent Facilities
We will live in a community that has well-used meeting places that enables effective services, community volunteering and activism
Projects
<p>Initiate a feasibility study to reinstate a pub/cafe in House of Darroch or a facility at the Millennium Hall.</p> <p>Install a public toilet or open up access to existing toilets</p> <p>Encourage the community to experiment with more group activities e.g. fitness, art, adult education, community cinema, walking.</p> <p>Improve coordination and marketing through a central booking system and a resource to promote events coordinated by a part time events and development officer</p> <p>Explore the possibility of developing youth led services possibly seeking funds for a part youth worker.</p> <p>Improve the play park including safe access to it</p> <p>Invest in the Old Kirk as a key village asset</p> <p>Stimulate projects that will celebrate the heritage of the place - a further action to collect historical facts and update the village's Wikipedia page has been suggested</p> <p>Resurrect the annual Village Show with a section dedicated to local handicrafts, art etc.</p>

Implementation Plan

- Consider the reinstatement of the cafe. KCT to commission a feasibility study.
- Approach KMH about access to public toilets and how this could be sustained by donations or sponsorship.
- Consult with the KMH as the key local facility about diversifying their offering.

- Kilmaronock Old Kirk Trust to convert the interior of the Old Kirk as a Community Heritage Hub



Map 7 – Theme 5 : A Place with Excellent Facilities

6. A Living and Vibrant Place

The Local Situation

At the 2011 census 45% of residents lived in detached houses, 51% live in semi-detached/terraced, with only 4% living in flats/apartments which is very different to the Scottish averages. There are only 8 properties for social rent in the Kilmarnock community council area, all in the village with the likely need for more to be built as there are challenges with young people and young families finding accommodation. Only 0.6% of properties are recorded as 2nd homes, and 1.5% of the housing stock is designated as long-term empty. Homes tend to be at the higher end of the Council Tax bracket which immediately indicate an affordability issue for local young people and families keen to stay in their own community. It is estimated that there are 26 holiday lets in the area.

What People Told Us

People were clear that there is a need for new entry level housing options for local people, but that the character of the community needed to be protected too, for it to remain attractive and unique. The unified view was that all housing should be small scale (space for single people, and starter family homes of up to 2-3 bedrooms to be prioritised over expensive substantial properties).

There should be a preference for single storey housing to fit with the landscape but also to benefit older or less able bodied people. Some options should exist for adapted or supported housing.

Where possible there was a preference for solutions such as Passivhaus i.e. Carbon neutral housing.

It is also vital that a rental market is created rather than just houses for sale. This could be via the nurturing of a relationship with a housing association.

With the infrastructure already under pressure, people noted that any new developments would need to take cognizance of the capacity of current sewerage, water and power infrastructure as well as facilities, transport, charging points etc.

There is a lack of clarity on sites for housing development and it was felt that an independent study would be required to identify the best solution. This should ensure that rather than large overwhelming developments, there could be sensitive use of a variety of small sites in the village.

There is a conflict between people feeling that there should be affordable houses in principle but a resistance against new developments and a debate about whether to increase the envelope of the village boundary for new homes.

While there was a clear preference expressed for more affordable housing to be available there is little consensus on specific locations. When asked in general terms, people indicated preference for vacant sites within the Gartocharn Village envelope and along some of the roads leading out of the village.

The community would like to see the field north of the Millennium Hall remain as an agricultural field where the landscape can be admired against the backdrop of the hills. The growth of lines of Leyland Cypress trees and building works has a very negative impact on the users of KMH. Any attempt to build houses in the field would be strongly resisted locally. The Aber Walk through the field down to Loch shore complements the hall perfectly.

A Living and Vibrant Place

We will be a place where people want to stay and bring up their families because there is a child friendly infrastructure of services and facilities

Projects

Commission a Housing Needs and Demand Analysis (HNDA) and undertake a site options appraisal in consultation with the community

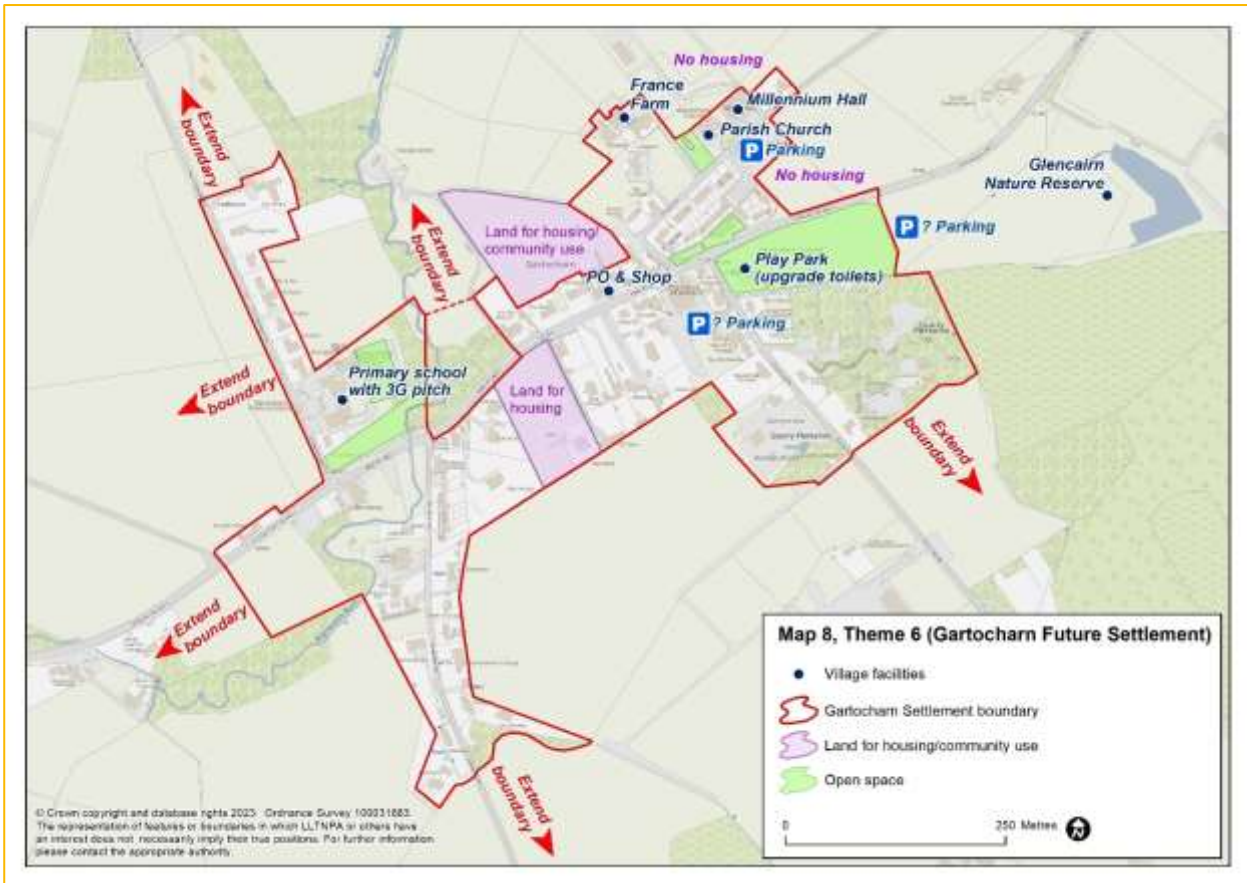
Establish small scale community owned affordable housing in response to that research

Focus housing on local young families and single people and supported solutions for older people who want to downsize.

Lobby for infrastructure to be improved to service increased demand including the water treatment plant, sewerage and utilities

Implementation Plan

- Commission an independent site options appraisal and HNDA
- Liaise with the planners to identify a site or sites and the scale and nature of a development
- Liaise with a registered social landlord or sensitive housing developer to encourage such a development in collaboration with the local community.



Map 8 – Theme 6 : A Living & Vibrant Place

Afterword

There has been a move in Scotland for communities to take more power and control over the places and services that matter to them. Local Place Planning is the next step in that process, allowing local communities to directly influence planning decisions in their area. It has been a huge privilege for Kilmarnock to be in the first wave of that new way of working.

The process of place planning has been a positive, collaborative experience where our community has thought deeply about the nature of our place, how to invest in what we value and address issues we are concerned about. Local residents have united around a shared vision about the kind of community we want this to be.

Crucially this has not been a negative list of problems to be fixed. Rather we have a clear idea of what is great about Kilmarnock and how we can build on that to address the challenges we have. We are a proactive place in an area of natural beauty of international significance. The people of Kilmarnock have overseen the development of the now busy Millennium Hall and have taken control of the Old Kirk for example. The school is an active partner and some local businesses have bought into the vision.

We now have a collective understanding of the opportunity that community-led Place Planning has presented to us and we very much look forward to how it will be implemented over the coming months and years. The Community Council will actively work with all local groups and the National Park Authority to ensure the vision is achieved.

In a changing environment that could negatively impact on our community, this is a real chance to invest in Kilmarnock so that future generations look back and recognise the positive step change that took place because of this community getting involved in the first phase of local place planning.

The people of Kilmarnock have stepped up. We are passionate about making this an even better place for everyone, of all circumstances and backgrounds, to live, work, play and visit.

The Local Place Planning Steering Group want to thank the organisations and individuals who gave their time, thoughts and ideas to the steering group and the National Park who gave guidance.

Appendices : Key matters that should be considered by the National Park Authority

Appendix 1 : Strategic Fit

Key strategies	How we Have Considered them	
<p>Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Local Development Plan adopted in 2016</p>	<p>The vision for the next 20 years as set out in this Development Plan emphasises Conservation, Visitor Experience and Rural Development.</p> <p>Conservation : The Kilmarnock Local Place plan has a focus on creating and enhancing sustainable access to the local environment and emphasises maximising National Park contact from a feeling of being on the edge.</p> <p>Visitor Experience : We are committed to sustainable tourism and prioritising things like the Old Kirk project will attract new visitors.</p> <p>Rural Development : Our Plan presents a picture of a sustainable rural community where local people can live, have leisure, access schools and get about easily</p>	
	<p>“New housing will be supported on small sites within the village and sites are identified for housing at Burnbrae Farm and France Farm.”</p>	<p>Housing ideas are set out in the thematic areas</p>
<p>Loch and the Trossachs National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023.</p>	<p>The National Park Partnership Plan refers to the same three strategic themes noted above. The Kilmarnock Local Place plan accord with much of the activity set out in the partnership plan.</p>	
<p>National Planning Framework 4</p> <p>There are six overarching spatial principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Just transition. 2. Conserving and recycling assets. 3. Local living. 4. Compact urban growth. 5. Rebalanced development. 6. Rural revitalisation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our “Climate Friendly Place” thematic area will address the just transition to net zero but that strategic perspective percolates through all the themes. 2. We understand the importance of embedded carbon and have a thematic area called “A Place with Excellent Facilities” including protecting existing assets such as the Millennium Hall and Old Kirk. 3. Our plan has a vision for creating a suite of appropriate social housing on small sites in Living and Vibrant Place” 4. n/a 5. Our “Living and Vibrant Place” thematic area sets out the desire to work towards sustainability. 6. Right across the six themes is a focus on rural regeneration. 	

Appendix 2 : National Park Authority

Some of the specific concerns raised, and suggestions made, by the community require explicit consideration by the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority as it develops its next Local Development Plan (LDP). This section summarises the issues for consideration that have emerged from the consultations and from discussion at the Kilmarnock Community Council and Kilmarnock Community Trust meetings .

It is recognized that some modification to the existing village envelope will be needed which will require further community consultation. See Map 8 above.

1. Living Well Locally : Housing/planning

To improve housing availability in the area we would support changes to the LDP to cover :

- Small scale housing of 2-3 bedrooms being prioritised over more substantial properties. These would be more affordable and suitable for new families or older people releasing their larger homes to general stock.
- Promotion of single storey housing to benefit elderly or less able bodied persons. Also helps with housing market mobility.
- Promotion of Carbon neutral housing within LDP Housing Policies for obvious benefit to counter Climate Change. This applies to alterations as much as new builds.
- The addition of a disability category to the LDP Housing Policies.
- Promotion of development for rental rather than sale.
- Any multiple unit developments to provide infrastructure impact assessment e.g. travel plan to major hubs, population equivalent values for public Water & Sewage use, traffic effects (access & egress to road network), off road parking, EV charging facilities etc.
- Sympathetic infill housing out with the village envelope – the opposite of clumping (massing). This makes use of some unproductive land to provide economic benefit to landowners and contribute to the housing supply. It also disperses development from a crowded central location with its traffic and parking issues.
- Placement of more weight on statutory consultees SEPA & Scottish Water to deliver stronger assessments of impacts of sewage treatment whenever an application proposes a discharge to any watercourse.
- Provision of a clear statement of intent that the LLTNPA will be rigorous in upholding land designations and will act in support of the Scottish Government's ambition to increase the area they cover from 18% to 30%

Reference Map 8

2. Living Well Locally : Amenities and Facilities

To support “Living Well Locally”, we would like to see :

- LLTNPA review the LDP & associated policies to promote provision and retention of local amenities and facilities that will help communities reduce their travel footprint e.g. proper scrutiny of change of use classes that impact on community facilities including pubs, cafés, shops, toilets etc.

- LLTNPA liaise across council borders with Transport providers to coordinate public transport services that connect villages across council boundaries with each other and the major transport hubs.

Reference Maps 3, 4, 6 & 7

3. Natural Open Spaces

To improve management and enjoyment of Natural Open Spaces in the area we would support changes to the LDP or other policies to cover :

- Promote provision for habitat restoration in development applications either as part of the development or developer contribution to a community accessible fund.
- Promote enjoyment of managed Natural Space by improving accessibility by sustainable means e.g. safe routes for walking, cycling, wheelchair use.
- Improve connectivity between popular sites via said safe routes.

Reference Maps 2a, 4 & 5

4. Paths and Cycleways

To encourage Active Travel, we would like to see :

- LLTNPA take more responsibility in maintenance and improvement of the existing path network by having good Landowner Agreements in place for Rights of Way and Core Paths at the very least.
- LLTNPA to reduce bureaucratic burden on Community Bodies who are engaged in projects to maintain and improve paths on their behalf.
- LLTNPA to assist Community Bodies in accessing funding for Active Travel projects large and small.

Reference Map 4

5. Enjoyment of Outdoor Spaces by all

To further the enjoyment of our outdoor spaces by all, we would like to see :

- more investment in outdoor education. This could be in schools at all age levels, online resources through social media, public facing online presences not just LLTNPA website and make leaflets available all tourist accommodation providers. Encourage Community Councils and Development Trusts to promote the educational material and the work of partners such as the Royal Highland Educational Trust (RHET).

Reference Map 2a

6. Pollution / protection of natural resources

To reduce pollution and increase protection of our natural resources, we would like to see :

- LLTNPA take more responsibility in tackling litter throughout the National Park not just on LLTNPA owned land.
- LLTNPA liaise with Local Authorities, Community Councils and Development Trusts and volunteers to remove or prevent litter.
- LLTNPA require SEPA responses to all Planning Applications involving ANY discharge of sewage outflows to a water course.
- LLTNPA take the lead with WDC, SW & SEPA to raise awareness and monitor run-off water quality for continual improvement.
- LLTNPA continue the Seasonal reviews with all Stakeholders to maintain a priority list of infrastructure improvement needs and encourage existing and future tourism providers to participate in provision of parking, bins and toilet facilities.

Reference Maps 2a, 5 & 7